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American Art Journal.

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THE OPERATIC SEASON.

From the present appearance of the new Academy of Music, we have but little doubt that it will be ready early in March for the occupancy of Max Maretzek, thus enabling him to open his season on the date announced. The work is carried on day and night without intermission, and so much of the interior work is completed and ready to be put in, that the finishing of the edifice for the reception of the public, is only the question of a day or two more or less. The scenery, which is extensive and beautiful, has already left the artists' hands; the costumes are ready, those already seen by the public are costly and elegant, and the properties are manufactured and ready for use. With one part already completed, and the other in so forward a state of preparation, we look forward with confidence to the first week of the coming March, to inaugurate a fine opera Company, in a splendid and commodious Opera House.

That Max Maretzek should open this building dedicated to Music, seems both just and natural, for he was the pioneer whose indomitable pluck, under ever-varying fortune, removed the obstacles, cleared the way, planted the seeds of taste in the best places, concentrated on it the interest of the wealthy, and though he reaped but scanty harvests himself, he won for Italian Opera a permanent home in the Metropolitan city of the Union, giving us an established Institution which is not only an attraction to our city, but a source of wealth, causing extraordinary activity in every branch of trade connected with articles of luxury and refinement.

There are some who twit Maretzek with weak remarks upon his many failures, forgetting that such facts speak trumpet-tongued of an energy that cannot be depressed, and of an executive ability which triumphs over obstacles which always seemed to be insurmountable, yet disappeared before his strong will and concentrated purpose. He had literally to educate the people, first to love the opera, next to comprehend at what cost it must be supported, and lastly the necessity of elevating the manners to the opera standard, particularly as regards a strict attention to full dress, which is an important element in stamping an enterprise with social importance. We have seen in the Astor Place Opera House, gentlemen in linen blouses stretched full length on the seats with their hats on! To give the Opera was by no means the most important business of the early management of the Italian Opera, and to Mr. Maretzek we mainly

owe the due perception of the people of those amenities and elegances, which now distinguish the conduct and appearance of our Italian Opera audiences.

These wise views could not be carried out without great opposition on the one side and determined persistence on the other, and though the struggle was long and obstinate, the common sense and quiet firmness of Maretzek ultimately prevailed.

The management of an Opera House is a most onerous position, involving an immense outlay in advance, and the assumption of a vast prospective pecuniary obligation. To meet this there is no subvention, or government assistance as in other countries, neither have we an aristocracy willing to pay from five hundred to five thousand dollars for a box for the season, as they have in England. By dividing the season up into two or three short seasons, the manager here is able to secure a few subscriptions, but he has nothing to rely upon but the chance that the public will visit the house in sufficient numbers to enable him to meet his expenses. For the profits, he shuts his eyes and opens his hands, and the overplus after expenses does not oppress his extended palms. Mr. Maretzek cannot commence a five months season with less than two hundred thousand dollars pecuniary responsibility, for the return of which he has not the shadow of a guarantee. Success to a paying point, is therefore a painful problem, and profit is a speck in the distance, which too often recedes and disappears as you approach.

With such facts before us, we can only admire the daring courage and self-reliance of the man who decides upon another campaign, after having fought so many, to him fruitless battles. Maretzek has several times met his Moscow, but never his Waterloo. So he buckles on his armor, and is ready in the field again. Despite all his endeavors and enterprise, the past few months have not yielded profitable results, but with the prestige of the New Academy, the excellent company under his control, the sympathy of all classes with his efforts, and his tact and judgment in catering for the public taste, we hope and believe that the ensuing season will atone for the past, and amply reward him for all the labor, anxiety and responsibility he has endured and assumed in the cause of Italian Opera.

THIRTEENTH WEDNESDAY EVENING CONCERT.

Mr. F. L. Harrison's Thirteenth Popular Concert took place last Wednesday evening, before an audience numbering at least fifteen hundred people. The points of attraction were the appearance of Mme. Parepa, and a programme exclusively composed of the music of the lamented Wm. Vincent Wallace.

The calibre of Wallace's genius might be

tested by the selection of that evening, but only partially, for to fully comprehend his high dramatic power, at least one of his grand finales, *ensemble* pieces, should be heard. Such a work, however, did not come within the scope of a popular concert. His overtures to *Maritana* and *Lurline*, with the grand scena from *Lurline*, were the most important works upon the programme. In these his command of melody, as well in its simplest as its most impassioned form of utterance, his fine perception of form, his vigorous and masterly counterpoint, and his magnificent treatment of the orchestra, are fully exemplified, and place him in the front rank of our great modern composers. The two overtures mentioned, have, of right, taken their place in the concert-room, side by side, with the few great works of that class, not written specially for the concert-room. These compositions were executed as well as the limited proportions of Mr. Thomas's orchestra would permit, and although they presented but a skeleton of the grand effects indicated by the score, they won general admiration and cordial applause.

Madame Parepa sang as usual with exquisite grace and fluency, and delighted all present by her spontaneous and brilliant warbling. In point of mere singing, she executed the grand Scena from "*Lurline*" most satisfactorily, but in a dramatic point of view, very inefficiently. She seems to have arrived at a point where she trusts solely to the charms of her natural gift—the voice. This she wields without exertion, but there is a mental grasp needed for a faithful interpretation of so grand a dramatic composition as the Scena from "*Lurline*." In the lighter compositions Mme. Parepa sang deliciously, and was, of course, honored with loud applause, and hearty encores. She retains her deserved popularity undiminished, and in a wide circle of music, she is without a rival.

We must compliment Mr. Carl Rosa very cordially upon his performance of Bott's "*Andante Religioso*," he threw into it a sustained passion and a quality of expression which faithfully interpreted its sentiment. Its execution was broader in conception, and more solid in style than any previous performance by Mr. Carl Rosa, and indicates a point of maturity in art from which the highest station may be achieved. He also executed Wallace's charming fantasia, on "*The Last Rose of Summer*," with grace, facility, and expression.

Mr. S. B. Mills favored us with a very feeble interpretation of Wallace's fine fantasia on "*Robin Adair*." He evidently had not given it his usual careful study. He not only missed notes, an unusual circumstance with him, but executed the piece more carelessly than so excellent an artist should do. His second selection, however, he played accurately and brilliantly, and elicited a hearty encore, which he responded to by another pleasant trifle of his own composition. Mr. Theodore Thomas con-